

Geishas of Japan.

"Geisha," the professional girl entertainer of Japan, is by no means to be confounded with "Geinin." The word Geisha really means actor, "gel" meaning a play or entertainment of any sort; and "sha" means a person. For instance, i-sha means physician, and so on. The word really means what "actor" does in English, but it has come to mean only those girls in Japan who are trained to entertain by dancing and singing to the shamisen and koto, the usual musical instruments for light entertainments; and they are also trained to converse agreeably on topics of the day, "Geinin," on the other hand, while it really means the same thing as geisha, has now come to be applied to artists, in a higher sense.

The name thus given to a class of women, though it seems a perfectly respectable one, does, in fact, sound otherwise to the ears of a Japanese. It is not in their occupation in a legitimate sense, that geisha are undesirable to have in a well-disciplined home, but in a certain unpleasant reputation that is naturally due to the circumstance of their calling.

The geisha are trained to entertain men, and not their own sex. They are the professional entertainers of the cities of the empire and are well paid for their services. The women of Japan, unlike those of Western countries, have little part in social functions, and the enjoyments of the men are not shared by their wives and daughters. When a man or a party of men wishes to arrange some social entertainment they expect the amusement of the occasion to be furnished by pretty and altogether charming geisha. Generally these affairs are held in tea houses, and it is customary to engage certain geisha who are generally known by what would be called in the Western world their stage names. These are names of flowers, gems, seasons, or indeed anything of great beauty and attractiveness, and are generally known as "flower names." Such names are O Kiku San which means the "Honorable Miss Chrysanthemum," or O Tama San, which is the "Honorable Miss Jewel," or O Haru San, the "Honorable Miss Spring." The "O," which means "honorable," is used only before words of one or two syllables, "Miss Camellia," for instance, would be Tsubaki San, merely.

These girls are possessed of wonderful charm and play havoc with the hearts of the young men of Tokio and the other cities. Many of them marry distinguished men, and the wives of some of the most prominent men in Japan today were geisha. They are especially alluring to the young college men of Japan. Some of the universities have found it necessary to make very strict rules in regard to the students consorting with the geisha, and some forbid it entirely.

The geisha make a very pretty show in the gay life of the cities, as they are trained to bear themselves well and be vivacious at all times and they dress luxuriously and in exquisite style. They have the principal boxes at theaters and at all public places. But they have no social rank. They do not form, as is too often supposed by Westerners, a class of demi-mondaine, as that class is known in London, Paris and New York; but they are considered as entirely too free in their manners to be admitted into good society.

It is probable that the geisha will disappear before the enfranchisement of women in Japan. Formerly the Japanese woman was not permitted to take part in social entertainment, and this function fell to the professional entertainer. Men found the geisha far more amusing than the women of their own acquaintance in society, and this led to the creation of this peculiar class. Now that education is accomplishing for women in Japan what it has accomplished for women in France, England and America, it is evident that the day of the geisha is passing. It needs only

an opportunity for development to show that the musme, the Japanese girl, can be as entertaining and as interesting as the most charming geisha of Kyoto—which has attained the bad eminence of producing the most beautiful and entertaining geisha in the Japanese empire.—Japanese Mail.

Society, Continued.

Mrs. Guy Palmer is visiting in the city. Mr. and Mrs. S. V. Shelp entertained at dinner on Wednesday in honor of Mrs. Buhl.

One of the best arranged functions of the week was the violet luncheon given at the Commercial club on Tuesday by Mrs. Walter G. Filer for Mrs. Burns-MacDonald.

Mrs. Clement gave a dinner for eight on Thursday. It was one of those delightful small affairs for which this hostess is becoming noted.

Mrs. Joseph Richards has gone to New York.

Mrs. George K. Fischer is hostess at the Country club today.

Mrs. W. A. Nelden has returned from the East.

Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Channing and Miss Burke have returned from New York.

Mrs. Walter Ellerbeck and Miss Genieve Ellerbeck will entertain at a large reception December 1st.

A wedding of much local interest was that of Miss Emma Davison and A. P. Taylor of the Honolulu Advertiser. The wedding took place in Honolulu, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. William M. Kincaid. The best wishes of all his old friends will go to "Pete" Taylor and his bride.

Miss June McIntyre gave a card party Wednesday evening for Miss Holabird of Los Angeles.

Isn't It a Pleasure.

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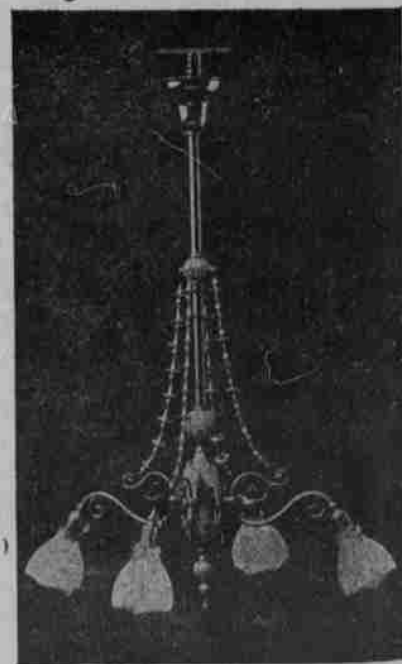
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